

 **FOUR WAY BOOKS**

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FICTION & POETRY

RECENTLY PUBLISHED & NOTEWORTHY

“The Falling Man”

The story is missing, so I fill it in—
it’s what a thinking person does to cope.
Without the details, only Death can win.

And so, the panic invariably set in,
the fires on lower floors extinguishing hope.
The story is missing, so I fill it in.

Standing on a desk, he chose the lesser sin.
The floor, too hot to stand on, began to slope.
Without the details, only Death can win.

The shattered glass, the beams then caving in,
could anyone sane maintain a shred of hope?
The story is missing, so I fill it in.

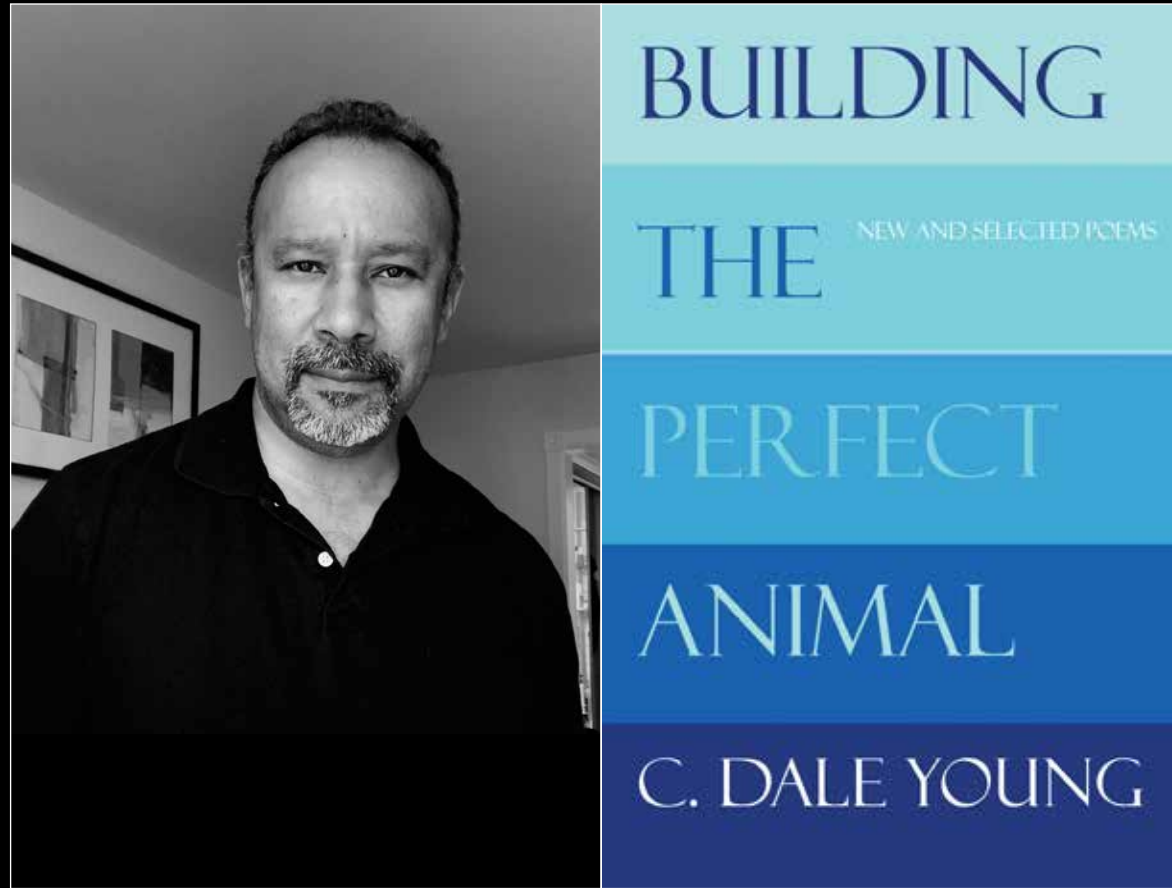
I need to know the way his mind gave in
as smoke engulfed the room. Who could cope?
Without the details, only Death can win.

And out the window, like the smoke’s fin,
he flew. He plunged to something green like hope.
Without the details, only Death can win.
The story is missing, so I fill it in.

C. Dale Young practices medicine full-time and teaches in the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers. He is the author of *The Affliction* (Four Way Books, 2018), a novel in stories, and the poetry collections *The Day Underneath the Day* (Northwestern, 2001); *The Second Person* (Four Way Books, 2007), a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in Poetry; *Torn* (Four Way Books, 2011), named one of the best poetry collections of 2011 by National Public Radio; *The Halo* (Four Way Books, 2016), a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in Poetry; and *Prometeo* (Four Way Books, 2021). He is a previous recipient of the Grolier Prize, the Stanley W. Lindberg Award for Literary Editing, and the 2017/2018 Hanes Award in Poetry given by the Fellowship of Southern Writers to honor a poet at mid-career. A fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation, his poems and short fiction have appeared widely. He lives in San Francisco.

C. Dale Young

photo by William Anthony



C. Dale Young brings together decades of work in *Building the Perfect Animal: New and Selected Poems*. These lyrics cut cleanly and exquisitely, performing a sacrifice at the altar of language. Remedying the inaccurate reports missionaries left in their “filthy journals,” “Memento” imagines instead the surgical precision Aztec priests must have used to “slice from the umbilicus up and through the diaphragm,” keeping the heart “while discarding the body, the feeble thing / tumbling down the steps of the pyramid.” This book unfolds like the poet’s experience of time: “All my life.’ It sounds so odd to say that out loud. / But strange thing after strange thing transpired.” Representing the still-warm heart, what will one day be the only surviving memento of the outlasted body that bore them, these poems explore the author’s simultaneous embrace of mortality’s richness and resignation to death’s inevitable decay. Young surveys the perpetual ultimatum of his roles: as an oncologist, the patients (including his parents) he couldn’t save; as an artist, the self he intends to confront honestly as his body ages; and, as a mortal raised with stories of the Taino gods, the impossibility of building the perfect animal. When teaching bedside manner, how to break the news to a patient that their cancer will kill them, Young’s student “wants a guide, a checklist,” he says, “but nothing like that exists. It has never existed.” *Building the Perfect Animal* is a monument to that inconceivable instruction manual, honoring the ceaselessly unprecedented work and gift of being now alive.

Building the Perfect Animal

Publication Date: March 15, 2025

Print | Page Count: 232 | Price: \$17.95 |

ISBN: 978-1-961897-32-8

E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-33-5

C. Dale Young’s *Building the Perfect Animal* opens with a heart being set in the torso of the first man, then a soul being set in that heart. It calls to mind Genesis’s explosion of light, but Young’s illuminations come from the chest, the big beating heart of experience. From Ovid to foie gras ducks, from Patroclus to Golden Gate Park, the new poems yearn and tumble toward meaning. This volume also offers verse curated from Young’s thirty years of singular writing, poems I read with delight and humility, each page demonstrating why he has become, for so many, indispensable, something real, something lasting.

—Kaveh Akbar

For thirty years, C. Dale Young has quietly written moving poems of clarity and precision. In *Building the Perfect Animal*, we appreciate not only these strengths in the new poems, but see within the generous selection from prior books the entirety of his deeply humane vision. Despite their intelligence, his poems stand as a record of the heart and body, a record of empathy.

—Natasha Trethewey

“Panorama After Foreclosure”

After Federico García Lorca and Yehuda Amichai

I used to think it could be solved this way:
like birds huddled above the U-Haul
along the branch rusting through
its green roof. Skycreatures. Balloon
on the house. My mother shrieks
in the garden. The snake
nude against the light. Here: I give you
my feathers—and here are all
my clouds, the volcano’s intimacy—
but the birds aren’t ready
to be oxen again, the mountain matted
with Sisyphus’ sweat. Always the disdainful
shelves of fruit, which is history. The engine
shivers. The dead stay dead.

photo by Johnny Steers



ONE MORE WORLD
poems LIKE THIS WORLD
Carlie Hoffman

Following *When There Was Light* (Winner of the 2023 National Jewish Book Award in Poetry), Carlie Hoffman’s third collection of poetry, *One More World like This World*, is a lyrical study of contemporary life—its lines echo amidst the imbalanced interdependence of globalization, in the wake of third-wave feminism, and from the active collapse of our American empire. Hoffman’s poems brilliantly survey both how women have been flattened, misunderstood, and displaced throughout time and across disciplines, and how women have made themselves at home in their minds and within their specific histories.

The timeless wisdom of this collection is how it unveils the constant and concurrent tragedies taking place everywhere around us while salvaging the irreducible pleasure of living from the wrecks of perception. Despite it all, we want to live. Perhaps, Hoffman seems to say, we were expelled from the garden not once but again and again, and, each time we exit, we go out searching for one more world like this world. “The apple’s a for-sale sign swaying from the tree,” she writes in the collection’s final poem “Borges Sells Me the Apple, Sells Me the World.” Or, to revisit the stage set in “Teaching the Persona Poem at Ramapo College of New Jersey,” “Outside the classroom window, snow falls, unencumbered / by a wind from nowhere the night Eurydice chooses to stay.”

Carlie Hoffman

Carlie Hoffman is the author of the poetry collections *One More World Like This World* (Four Way Books, 2025); *When There Was Light* (Four Way Books, 2023), winner of the National Jewish Book Award; and *This Alaska* (Four Way Books, 2021), winner of the Northern California Publishers & Authors Gold Award in Poetry as well as a finalist for the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Award. Hoffman is the translator from the German of both Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger’s *Blütenlese* (World Poetry Books, 2026) and *White Shadows: Anneliese Hager and the Camera-less Photograph* (Atelier Éditions, 2025), as well as the poems of Rose Ausländer. Hoffman’s other honors include a 92NY “Discovery” / *Boston Review* prize and a *Poets & Writers* Amy Award. She is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Small Orange Journal*. She lives in New York City.

One More World Like This World

Publication Date: March 15, 2025

Print | Page Count: 80 | Price: \$17.95 |

ISBN: 978-1-961897-28-1

E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-29-8

Wise beyond her years, Carlie Hoffman’s *One More World Like This World* resonates with experience, emotion, and acute prosodic and poetic intelligence, without ever wearing any of it on her proverbial sleeve. Though the landscape has gotten ever more bedraggled, Doctor Williams would have easily recognized the diners, parking lots, and for-sale signs dotting the terrain of these poems. And Jack Spicer would have understood exactly why Eurydice shows up. As so much that comes to us now feels ready-made, there is a resilience and clarity in Hoffman’s work that is all too rare and warrants our close attention.

—Ammiel Alcalay

from “I Found Kin in a Thrift Store Photograph”

Outside of time, inside the picture
this anonymous child has come

to be my family. Somehow
his legs sway with the framed waves

at the same pace loneliness slips
beneath the surface of intuition, floods

the warm current called desire.
On the far side I will never see

his spine is my creation myth, a bone river
of redemption, a choice to live, despite

unkeepable love. This religion of slow loss
balanced on the balls of his feet.

photo by Marcus Jackson



In defiance of life’s intractable march forward, *Red Wilderness* by Aaron Coleman (Winner of the 2020 GLCA New Writers Award) sounds the strange fathoms of the past, weaving a living song beyond what haunts our country and ourselves. Coleman’s second collection interpolates American history with his own family’s legacy, reflecting on national identity, Blackness, taboo, faith, and remembrance while enacting a multigenerational chorus of poems that stretches back to the Civil War. In present day, Coleman “[tries] a new way home / past the pawn shop neon-green with memory” and inspects bird bones in “tall, forgotten weeds” while “hard rain” turns his ground into “a gulch”—another place where “the end got here before us.” In the next poem, transported between storms, Coleman channels his ancestor, a soldier of the Pennsylvania 25th Colored Infantry at sea during a downpour in March 1864: “I say no to death now. I’m nobody’s slave / now. I’m alive and not alone.” In these restorative lyrics, an end is an entrypoint to memory and reimagination, to something unending—a spiritual freedom, collective strength, and boundless love threading separate years into one strand. *Red Wilderness* visualizes an intimate, living archive that maps myths and realities of blood, boundaries, geography, and genealogy, and Coleman brilliantly curates the sound of time’s river wending across ancient land. “Hold and let fall water,” he instructs us. “If I / listen for my body living I hear who I am.”

Aaron Coleman

Aaron Coleman is a poet, translator, educator, and scholar of the African Diaspora. He is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment of the Arts, Cave Canem, the Fulbright Program, and the American Literary Translators Association. His debut poetry collection, *Threat Come Close*, was the winner of the Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writers Award, and his chapbook, *St. Trigger*, won the Button Poetry Prize. He is also the translator of Afro-Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén’s 1967 collection, *The Great Zoo*, selected for the Phoenix Poet Series by University of Chicago Press. His poems, essays, and translations have appeared in publications including *The New York Times*, *Boston Review*, *Callaloo*, and *Poetry Magazine*. From Metro-Detroit, Coleman has lived and worked with youth in locations including Spain, South Africa, Chicago, St. Louis, and Kalamazoo. He is an assistant professor of English and Comparative Literature in the Helen Zell Writers’ Program at the University of Michigan.

Red Wilderness

Publication Date: March 15, 2025

Print | Page Count: 135 | Price: \$17.95 |

ISBN: 978-1-961897-24-3

E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-25-0

The very first line of “In the City of Tenderness and Desperate Promises,” the official opening poem in Aaron Coleman’s evocative and blistering *Red Wilderness* is this: “Punctured in the soft hour, we tried a new way home . . .” That unproven path winds “all up in through here,” past mudglut banks, trees ripped with ghosts, Red Lick and St. Louis, rain-pelted ruins and through America’s slick and murderous landscape—and straight toward the tumult and testimony of Black days, both here and behind us. On the way to “home and never home,” these keen and luminous poems chronicle what is ultimately a way for Black folks to thrive in the midst of storm.
—Patricia Smith

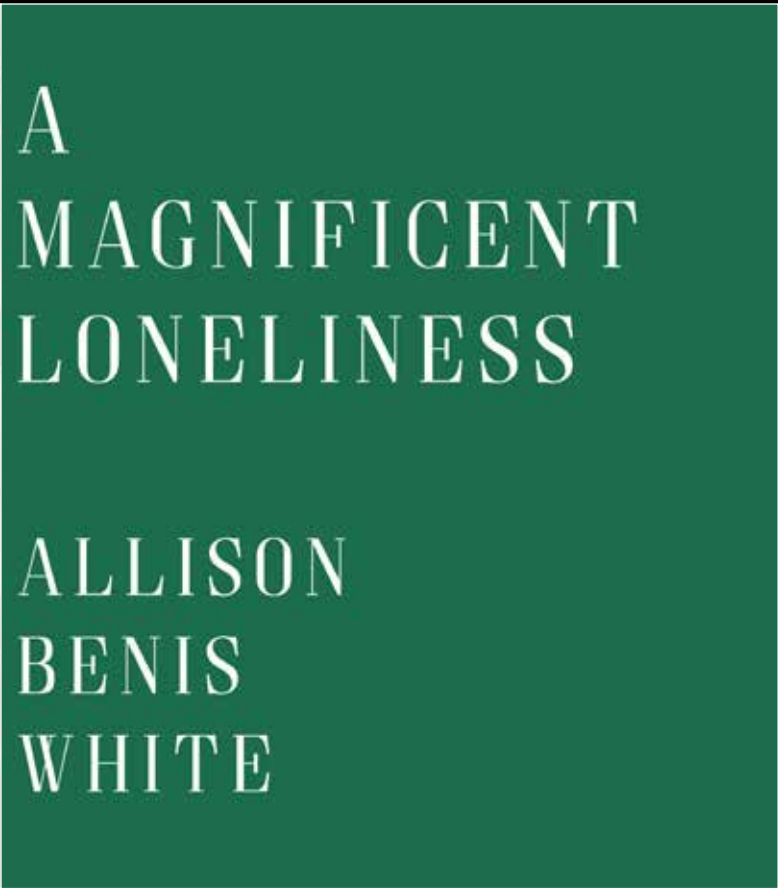
The ancestral song of Aaron Coleman rings true in *Red Wilderness*, clearing a way for us to see up ahead. There’s the legacy of family and of the community we build outward, and then there’s the wilderness, that country, around us all, which Coleman maps out, showing us “what is true but nameless,” and that which “knows no beginning or end.” Whether he offers a reverie from a crooner, “somewhere smiling, / as new friends glide together,” or we fall into, “a black boy’s body . . . a language sculpted out of silence,” what’s clear is that Coleman is a cartographer of our sensibilities, our fears, and our hopes for a space we can call our own.

—A. Van Jordan

from “Description of Symptoms”

Lying on the floor tonight, snowflakes
cut from paper laid over my eyes, a hand
carved from wood laid over my mouth.
If the truth is the thing you must not say,
I will speak for the vase now
as it falls: it is better never
to be at all.

photo by Steve White



Ethereal, airy, and spare at once, *A Magnificent Loneliness* is a dialogue with ghosts. White, whose previous work won the Rilke Prize and the Four Way Books Levis Prize judged by Claudia Rankine, assembles these pages as an ekphrastic and epistolary record of her solitary journey through loss. These poems relate to artwork, the history of artistic practice, and inherited lore to broker an oblique and piecewise conversation concerning pain too vast to articulate all at once. “I don’t know how to love the world but to love / her leaving.” These lyrical iterations represent White’s attempts to comprehend the individual suffering of being alive, and to metabolize the grief of women’s epidemic disappearance, literal and spiritual, through sickness and despair. Through those efforts, she illuminates a magnificent loneliness—the privilege of being alive to our anguish, of missing someone dearly because someone dear existed—and a reason for not yet departing that struggle. “How to leave / the world but to turn to leave her— / but to turn my head back / to see her.”

Allison Benis White

Allison Benis White is the author of *The Wendys*, *Please Bury Me in This*, winner of the Rilke Prize, and *Small Porcelain Head*, selected by Claudia Rankine for the Levis Prize in Poetry. Her debut, *Self-Portrait with Crayon*, won the Cleveland State University Poetry Center First Book Prize. Her poems have appeared in *The American Poetry Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *New England Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Pushcart Prize XLI & XLVII: Best of the Small Presses*, and elsewhere. She has received honors and awards from the Poetry Society of America, the San Francisco Foundation, and the Academy of American Poets. She teaches at the University of California, Riverside.

A Magnificent Loneliness

Publication Date: March 15, 2025
Print | Page Count: 72 | Price: \$17.95 |
ISBN: 978-1-961897-22-9
E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-23-6

In *A Magnificent Loneliness*, Allison Benis White offers her signature lyricism and profundity to explore loss, grief, and the intricate dance between what we perceive and what remains hidden. Through her deft use of metonymy, White forms awe-inspiring connections across time, linking the past with the present, the visible with the unseen. This evocative book is a poignant, poetic meditation on the transformative power of sight and meaning—whether in a poem, a painting, or a human—to reveal a deep compassion for the lives we share and the complexities of our emotional terrain.
—Airea D. Matthews

“HIV Triolet”

We were thin for different reasons.
I was fourteen. It was 1989,
and I wore shit-kickers with cut-off jeans
that wore thin. (For different reasons,
neither of us dressed right for the season.)
I sat in his Wrangler one seedy time.
We were thin for different reasons:
I was fourteen; it was 1989.

photo by Schaefer Photography



Like an itinerant evangelist, poet Gabriel Fried transforms every space he enters with a sacred kind of attention. If “the big-top makes a chapel of the fetid / lot between the ballpark and the river, / where the air sticks like a rancid jam,” Fried erects poetry in each humid landscape of our feverish lives. And the roaming world of childhood to which *No Small Thing* returns us is one where shapes and selves may shift in one blessed blink. Defter than nostalgia, slyer than sentiment, the voices of these poems cast just so many spells of indeterminacy. Behind their looking glass, Gabriel Fried guides us down the corridors where sociality and gender, religion and ethnicity, language and identity negotiate their forms. The richly saturated subjects of *No Small Thing* range from pastoral youth, ancestral tenements, and remembered ghettos to the revival tent, child preachers, and the word-encrusted performances of the grown but still enchanted poet. Fried’s work captures the earthy and illusory magic of poetry, as if performing a “negative-numbered, phantasmagoric” self-portraiture with only “a fogged-up looking glass.”

Gabriel Fried

Gabriel Fried is the author of three collections of poetry: *No Small Thing*, *The Children Are Reading*, and *Making the New Lamb Take*. He is the longtime poetry editor for Persea Books and Director of Creative Writing and Associate Professor of English at the University of Missouri.

No Small Thing

Publication Date: March 15, 2025
Print | Page Count: 96 | Price: \$17.95 |
ISBN: 978-1-961897-34-2
E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-35-9

No Small Thing is a book filled with wry wit, and formal dexterity, and grit, as Gabriel Fried moves from the joys and losses of mid-life, to the underworld of childhood, and back again. “For the worms,” he writes, “I sing a sad new hymn,” and indeed, these poems make a beautiful, soulful song.
—Patrick Phillips

A preternatural intelligence infuses *No Small Thing* as Gabriel Fried climbs and descends childhood’s lattices of fear, wonderment, and becoming. These quietly profound, radiant poems crystalize those sensations with a playfulness and technical brilliance that feel like a kind of faith. They glimmer and refract into parenthood, an age with its own questions and awes. The sequence for Lucie Brock-Broido is jaw-dropping. A superb collection.
—Paula Bohince

From “The Fire Passage”

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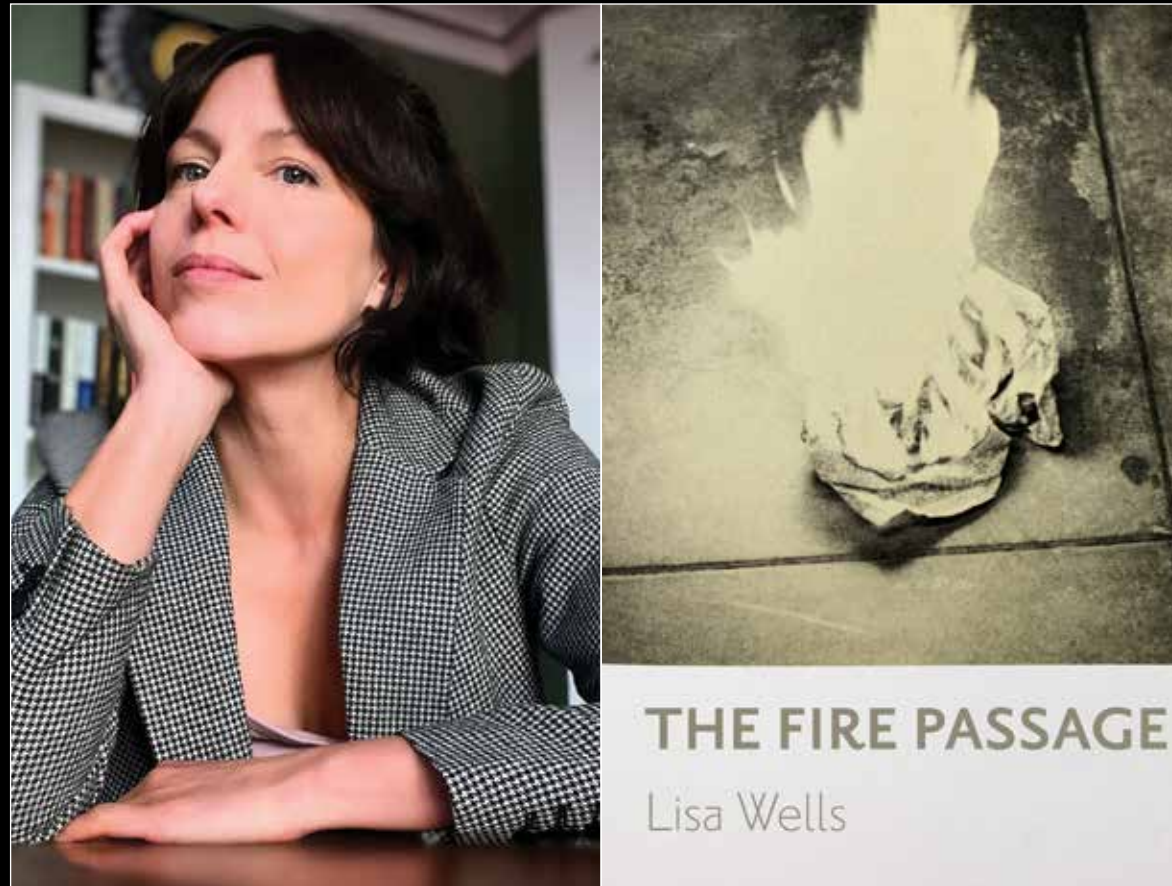
Is it Eden I long for?
A bayou at dusk, glitzy with fireflies
where rising tides arouse the wharves.

I am engirdled in the plastic rings
of every sixer I ever shotgunned.

Reliving the all-day drunks,
fucked thrice before sundown.

My nostalgia stumps me.

photo by Jude Wilkinson-Wells



Winner of the 2025 Four Way Books Levis Prize in Poetry selected by Pulitzer Prize recipient Diane Seuss, *The Fire Passage* is a lyric descent in the epic tradition, traveling unto realms unmoored by extreme weather and mysterious illness before resurfacing to the light of a world remade. Recording her experience of a health crisis amid continuous natural disaster, poet Lisa Wells recontextualizes biblically scaled plagues as the entropic catastrophes of our late-stage capitalist society. “I was sick, plainly. / I had my symptoms.” Confronted with the disbelief and “skeptical pity” of medical professionals, Wells brilliantly illuminates the psychological exile of illness where patients, “turned out by the body,” find themselves on “malignancy’s forced pilgrimage.” The passage she travels is a gauntlet of flame, a path guarded by gatekeepers who acted “as if the wound were in [her] mind.” (“And it was. But it was elsewhere, too.”) This book serves as the answer to a query posed by bad-faith actors and the insightful dream-self alike: “*so the wound is a window?*” These pages convey grim comfort and radical optimism at once, reminding, “*Friend, we die, but do not die alone.*” They insist on an affirmative practice of responding to rhetorical questions, building solidarity among the weary who call out, ensuring that they—that we—are not alone with silence. “It comes for all? // *It comes for all.*” Despite its frank acknowledgment of fire’s lethal nature, the fortifying poetics of this book never preclude the possibility of resurrection or lose their focus on rebuilding a better world from the ashes of this one.

Lisa Wells

The Fire Passage

WINNER OF THE FOUR WAY BOOKS LEVIS PRIZE IN POETRY

Lisa Wells is a poet, nonfiction writer, and editor. Her debut collection, *The Fix*, won the Iowa Poetry Prize. Her most recent book, *Believers* (FSG) was a finalist for the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. Her work has been published in *Harper’s Magazine*, *Granta*, *The New York Times*, and *Orion*, and has been anthologized in *The Best American Science and Nature Writing* and *The Best American Food and Travel Writing*. She lives in Portland, Oregon with Joshua Marie Wilkinson and their son. Together they serve as editors for the Kuhl House Poets Series at the University of Iowa Press.

Publication Date: March 15, 2025
Print | Page Count: 88 | Price: \$17.95 |
ISBN: 978-1-961897-36-6
E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-37-3

“I lived in terror and I loved the world.” This is a primary tension in Lisa Wells’ sublime *The Fire Passage*, which tracks an odyssey, in language at once apocalyptic, rapturous, erotic, and absurd, from flood, to fire, to air. *The Fire Passage* is an epic, in structure and scale, in physical, and metaphysical ambition. Wells has lowered her bucket into the Gilgamesh well, has drawn up the waters of Dante, and revived the archetypes required to confront our deadly contemporary moment. Within the epic frame, Wells offers a remarkable lyric sensibility, with a miniaturist’s eye for the startling, precise, even delicate image. “Sores, in precise succession, throbbing along / a child’s spine like the buttoned closure of a dress,” she writes. And elsewhere, “A bayou at dusk, glitzy with fireflies / where rising tides arouse the wharves.” At times, she punctures the illusion of timelessness by dropping in a pop cultural reference—“Their keeper was a blowsy girl in Princess Leia buns”—or places us, with a moment of American vernacular: “In the unfortunate dive bar of daughters / descendent of daughters / you must dance with the one that brung you,” she writes, and names Laughlin, Nevada, the “asshole of the planet.” She does not strand us, however, in Laughlin, nor any of its iterations. This is a pilgrimage, primarily, of the Word. “That Which spoke the dream into my ear / spoke out of my body / spoke me out,” she writes, offering us the possibility of lyric rebirth. “This human way is abrupt as a brick shithouse / but down in that dismal pit the slag / fosters heaps of flowers.” In *The Fire Passage*, Lisa Wells has given us a masterful template for grief, survival, and transformation.

—Diane Seuss

From After the Operation

(After the operation,

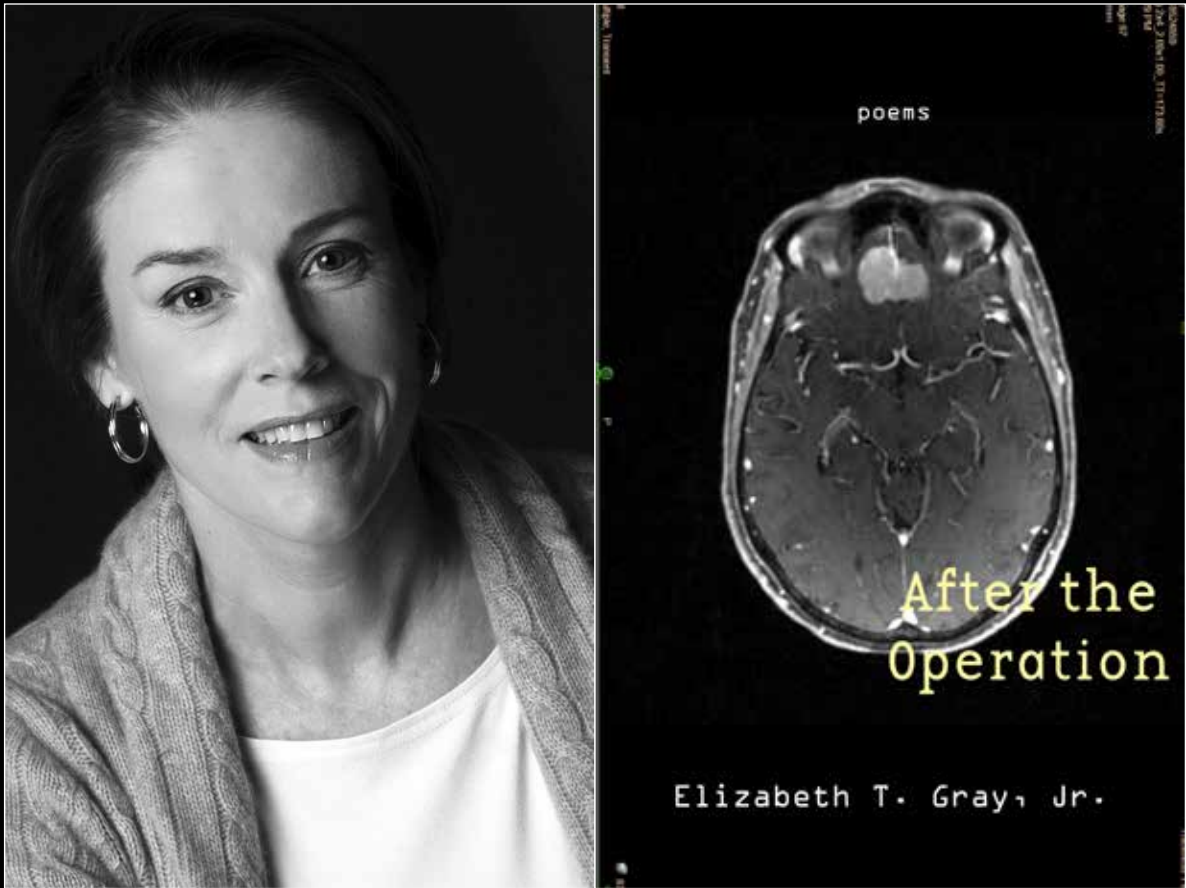
intact abandoned
its nouns, the idea

itself fell
apart and was

last seen somewhere
in an enamel

bowl in pieces
next to a bone saw)

photo by Susan Johann



Elizabeth T. Gray Jr.’s *After the Operation* reports from the No Man’s Land she wandered following eight hours of surgery to remove a brain tumor. What does the mind feel like after something has been taken out of your skull? “An uninhabited coast,” or “all shatter and thoroughfare?” These spare poems interweave medical documents, journal entries, and memories, assembling a polyvocal chorus to document the surgery itself and the recuperation process. The decentralized perspective of *After the Operation* allows the reader to see the procedure holistically—medically, from the doctor’s perspective; subjectively, from the author’s; and vicariously, from her caretakers’, family’s, and friends’—while approximating the disassociation the patient feels as she navigates unexpected cognitive and emotional side effects. Sometimes bleak but always gorgeous, *After the Operation* does us a great service in illuminating and articulating the complexities of a serious medical event. This tangible chronicle of Gray’s terror, isolation, bafflement, desolation, love, loss, relief and gratitude serves as a beacon for all of us who will one day, as Susan Sontag says, find ourselves dwelling in “the kingdom of the sick.” Gray makes valiant use of her citizenship there, asking, “When they come for you, when the unfamiliar roar comes, and a sudden opening, and light pours in, when what had kept you safe, what had always been, is breached, pried open, and light pours in, what do you want to have been writing then?” *After the Operation* is her triumphant answer.

Elizabeth T. Gray, Jr.

After the Operation

Elizabeth T. Gray, Jr. is a poet, translator, critic, and corporate consultant. Previous collections of poetry include *Salient* (New Directions, 2020) and *Series | India* (Four Way Books, 2015). *Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season* (New Directions, 2022), her translations of Iran’s major modern woman poet, Forough Farrokhzad (1937–1962), was a finalist for the 2023 PEN Award for Poetry in Translation. *The Green Sea of Heaven*, a 30th anniversary edition of her translations of Iran’s major medieval mystic poet, Háfiz (d. 1389), appeared from Monkfish Publishing in 2024. She currently serves on the Boards of Kimbilio for Black Fiction, the *Beloit Poetry Journal* Foundation, Friends of Writers, and the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran. She was a founder and managing partner/CEO of Conflict Management, Inc. and Alliance Management Partners, LLC, boutique corporate consulting firms. She holds a BA and JD from Harvard University and an MFA from Warren Wilson and lives in New York City.

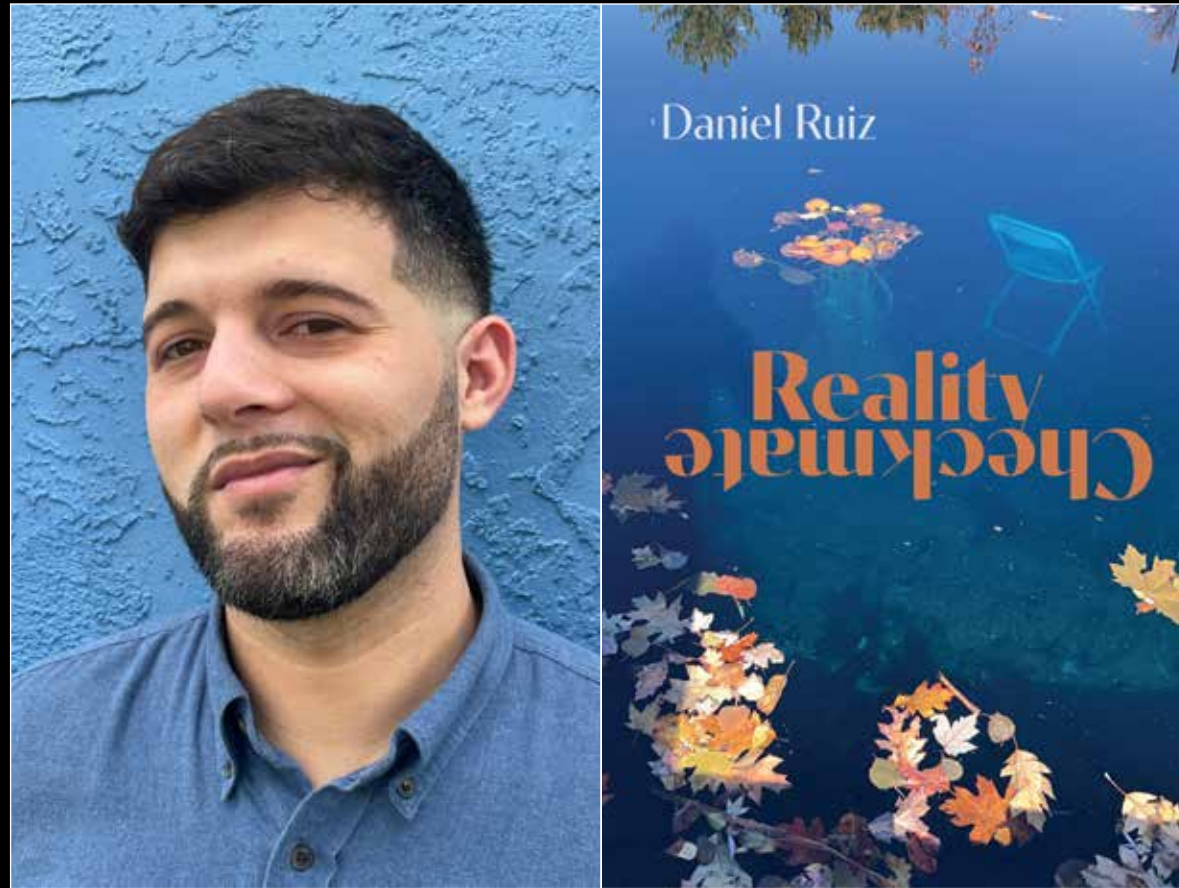
Publication Date: March 15, 2025
Print | Page Count: 88 | Price: \$17.95 |
ISBN: 978-1-961897-40-3
E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-41-0

Elizabeth Gray was 68 when she learned that the benign tumor below the frontal lobe of her brain had grown. After consultations with her doctors and family, she elected to have the tumor removed. If you think *After The Operation* sounds like it is going be clinical and dry, you are wrong. It is a book of drifting consciousness, of altered states, memory loss, and inescapable change. Birds show up at her window. She wonders what happened to the pieces of her skull that were removed. The doctor’s reports sound like they were written by Tristan Tzara pretending to be a medically trained bot. She reads the everyday world (or word), sometimes erroneously. She is surgically precise about the hazy state she experiences after what had been part of her goes missing. What else is left, she asks. Seeing the skull as a room that has been breached. She wonders (that word again) “what do you want to have been writing then?” The answer: “[this] lovely lotiform wishing-cup in translucent alabaster.”
—John Yau

“Agenda”

All that’s left is to be happy.
We’ve tried letting closing doors
crunch our fingers, reaching
for a bite of white bread; seen
every episode of this season’s
war on a cheap television set;
sat at bus stops mid-flood,
hoping. We have fought back
but forgotten, or tried to forget
the tide of bones the sand sits on
as high tide eats the shore.
You’ve got to stare at a mountain
for centuries to notice it move
an inch. If the moon crumbled,
we’d be the pinball that broke the glass.
But, now, the only thing is to be happy.
We have tried everything else.

photo by Linda Núñez.



Daniel Ruiz

Daniel Ruiz is a Puerto Rican and Cuban poet and translator, a graduate of the Michener Center for Writers and Florida State University, and a two-time finalist for the National Poetry Series. In 2016, he was a Fulbright Scholar to Chile. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD in English & Literary Arts at the University of Denver, where he edits poetry and translations for the *Denver Quarterly*.

Reality Checkmate

Publication Date: March 15, 2025

Print | Page Count: 104 | Price: |

ISBN: 978-1-961897-38-0

E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-39-7

These debut poems on mortality, identity, and meaning get a thorough and volatile surrealist spin by Daniel Ruiz. Sly, funny, and extravagant, *Reality Checkmate* evokes life not as it was or is, but how it could be, drenched in paradox and candor. Ruiz’s exciting associations and musical turns have a humanity that grins back at us as we read. Sailors, supermarkets, movies, and other “remnants of empire,” as he puts it, get a fresh coat of enchantment. As Daniel Ruiz writes, “There are no kings, only magicians of the singular...”

—Jane Miller

In *Reality Checkmate*, Daniel Ruiz tackles reality itself, nimbly assembling and reassembling what we think we know in order to move us toward a greater, more profound feeling. His end game is elegant and swift, and when Reality tips over its king in defeat, it’s Life that comes out the winner, which includes us, too.

—Tomás Q. Morín

A dynamic and philosophical debut collection, Daniel Ruiz’s *Reality Checkmate* choreographs the endless wrestling match between lyrical sensibility and ontological principles taking place on the mind’s stage. These poems exquisitely demonstrate that phenomena in the material world are rarely as simple as they seem and yet must continually confront the universe’s countermove—the constraints of life itself, the knowledge that all we truly have is the present moment and the face value of our perceptions. He succinctly summarizes the history of art as cultural capital—“all of us are / eternally punished with proving / literature is about literature // after all”—while revealing the redundancies and blind spots of intellectualism—“Meanwhile, a lost sheep / finds grass to eat // anywhere it wants, / and does not mind, / like Lorca, letting its hair // grow long.” While *Reality Checkmate* delights in the cerebral mode, its celebration of relativity as well as the lush materiality of language yields equal imagery and musicality, upholding sensory experience and human relationships as existentially significant in the absence of absolute truths. In Ruiz’s astonishing first book, dawn is not morning—or rather, not merely morning. “Madrugada” rejects a navel-gazing discourse on sentimentality and the passage of days, commanding that “you for whom meaning / is the meaning of beauty, be gone.” We could spend our whole lives ideating a metaphysics of time and waste the wonder of sunlight right in front of us. “Meanwhile, / the clouds are proud of all of us. It’s 12:01. / A man dragged by a poodle says / *Good morning*. Everyone in the orchestra / stands up at once.”

“106 Degrees in Springtime”

After our fight, I go for a drive
through the drought-stricken night,
stricken with how far we’ve come
to ruin our love, how we evolved
from monkeys to become monkeys
biting each other’s throats. I want to ask the moon
for help, but its light is wilted from heatstroke.
What makes us forget that we are each other’s planet
on our only planet? I park by the creek that’s only a trickle.
What will we finally do with all the cars when the rivers
are dark scars, what are we doing,
I say when I get home, you standing at the door,
your sad face looking into mine, the moon
looking down on us, tearless.

photo by Kathleen Horan



Susan Browne

Susan Browne is the author of three previous poetry collections: *Buddha’s Dogs*, winner of the Four Way Books Intro Prize; *Zephyr*, winner of Steel Toe Books Editor’s Choice award; and *Just Living*, winner of the Catamaran Poetry Prize. Other awards include The James Dickey Poetry Prize, The Los Angeles Poetry Festival Prize, and a fellowship from the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center. She lives in Northern California.

Monster Mash

Publication Date: March 15, 2025

Print | Page Count: 120 | Price: \$17.95 |

ISBN: 978-1-961897-26-7

E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-27-4

In her canny and wonderfully approachable new poems, Susan Browne offers a worldview that is at times mournful, at times foreboding, but always grounded in tender and intimately rendered humanity. These are poems of place, as California’s fraught ecology and climate are front of mind, but they are also poems of time in which the speaker’s considerations of her own mortality and temporality offer us striking observation and poignant perspective throughout. *Monster Mash* is a gift rich with nostalgia, insight, and wisdom, and I am grateful for it.

—Jaswinder Bolina

Susan Browne’s poems are songs to the suffering earth, to love in the face of the pitiless moon, merciless angels, to the past and the future, a mother’s death and what comes after, a father slipping slowly away, youth and aging, old loves and new. A whole life is stuffed into these pages, you can hear it breathing as you read.

—Dorianne Laux

“How Was I Supposed to Grow Up Straight”

when already at ten I knew the Latin
for *the son is the husband of his mother*?
How many midnights did my mother load
the LP of Oedipus Rex, lower the needle,
Stravinsky himself conducting for her,
for her racoon eyes and her benzos, as she leaned
alone, mercy, mercy, onto the loveseat
in her corduroy caftan covered with strawberries—

photo by Carl Nardiello



Willow Hammer is a consummate lyric of the aftermath. In his fifth book, Patrick Donnelly has his face pressed against the eyepiece as he looks unsparingly at the past, generating a sequence of poems that fans out kaleidoscopically upon learning, twenty years afterward, that his stepfather assaulted his sister.

In response to this crime, Donnelly traces the consequences of ignorance, denial, bargaining, complicity, and finally revelation that reverberated through his and his loved ones' lives for five decades. His discovery of this catalyzing violation not only recontextualizes the siblings' shared history, but inflects the present as—finding analogues of his sister's abuse in the classical canon—he remembers his escape from home into spiritual disciplines and the study of dead languages. Revisiting the evolution of his own sexuality, he remembers singing a Byrd Mass after a night at a gay bathhouse, characterizing the tenor and bass as “two wrestling saints,” “lowest of the four voices— / once I thought I saw them kiss each other's faces.”

And that—recovering glimpses of his sister's unknowable interiority, reckoning with a truth that is unbearable and inescapable—is this book's difficult and endless work. “Now” documents the poet's arrival at this compromise: “I remember my / little sister that was, / little willow of glass / upon whom he laid / his hammer hands.” There is no revocation of the hands, but with tenderness, wit, and fury, Donnelly's lyrics refuse to let their shadow obscure his sister's recovery of her own agency.

Patrick Donnelly

Patrick Donnelly is the author of five books of poetry. Former poet laureate of Northampton, Massachusetts, Donnelly is program director of The Frost Place, a center for poetry and the arts at Robert Frost's old homestead in Franconia, New Hampshire. His poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Slate*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The Yale Review*, and many other journals. Donnelly's translations with Stephen D. Miller of classical Japanese poetry were awarded the 2015-2016 Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature. Donnelly's other awards include a U.S./Japan Creative Artists Program Award, an Artist Fellowship from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and an Amy Clampitt Residency Award.

Willow Hammer

Publication Date: March 15, 2025

Print | Page Count: 112 | Price: \$17.95 |

ISBN: 978-1-961897-30-4

E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-31-1

Heartbreaking, gorgeous, seamless, smart, *Willow Hammer* is a stunning gift of honesty and generosity. In the central sequence, Patrick Donnelly takes us through a dazzling stream of imagistic, linguistic, and literary associations to arrive at emotional, as well as factual truths about a family crime. Sister begets willow and moon; Billy begets names and cherries; mother begets milk begets moon, and back again to willow, with myth and religion among the frequent reference points. Book-ending this astonishing series are personal poems of sexuality that will be familiar to the poet's readers, put here in the larger context of family and presented with hard-won wisdom. When the poet says, near the end of the book, “I think I can sleep now,” you will be with him. Meanwhile, you won't be able to put this astonishing book down.

—Martha Collins

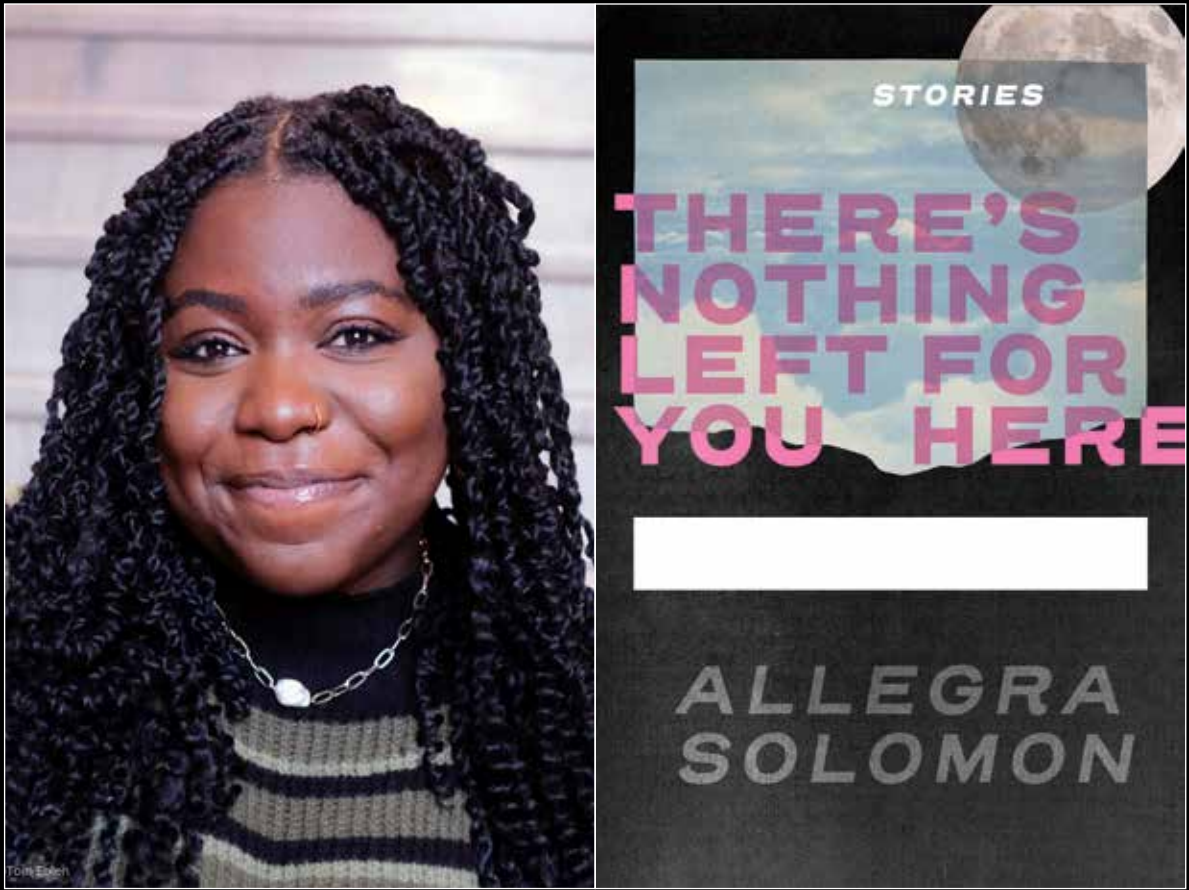
From “True Blue”

People liked being friends with Alexandria because she knew how to shut the fuck up. This is what she always told Nikita—that was the difference between the two of them. The first time she said this was two weeks after the Tommy incident. The school’s wound was still raw, bellying with consequences. She said it in her basement, game controller cold in her hands. Their adolescent bodies were lain on the hard carpet of Alexandria’s floor, playing Street Fighter on the TV by the window.

It’s a science, Alexandria said. You just soften yourself—cloudlike. You laugh not when the joke is funny, but when it’s supposed to be. You smile and pout and bat your little eyes and say, Really? Never have an opinion. You are a “yes” man. You are kind and docile and dumb. They will pour themselves into you. It works every time. Alexandria began to bang on the controller.

Nikita watched the pale glow of the television screen bounce off Alexandria’s dark face, mixing with the daylight. The sun was everywhere.

photo by Tom Eblen



A luminous debut of timely, vibrant stories, *There’s Nothing Left for You Here* by Allegra Solomon is the winner of the 2023 Kimbilio National Fiction Prize, an honor that celebrates excellence in contemporary fiction from writers of the African diaspora. Ranging in subject but joined by their keen attention to the lives of contemporary young women of color, these stories feature an eclectic cast of characters who are as fascinatingly complex as they are deeply relatable. In these pages, a heartbroken young woman named Salem starts over with her estranged best friend from college (Maida) and moves to LA, where she meets and becomes entangled with Theo, Maida’s mysterious wealthy benefactor; teens Nikita and Alexandria bind together to navigate the adolescent politics of high school and female friendship as the only two Black girls at their school; and Ciara, a bookstore employee, agrees to house-sit for a white coworker named Angelina she hardly knows, only for Angelina to disappear with no notice and leave Ciara looking after her apartment and dog. In the words of Kimbilio Prize judge Deesha Philyaw, readers should prepare to find “these fresh, moody, unconventional stories...irresistible.”

Allegra Solomon

There’s Nothing Left for You Here

WINNER OF THE KIMBILIO NATIONAL FICTION PRIZE

Allegra Solomon was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. She got her MFA from the University of Kentucky and her B.A. in Creative Writing from Ohio University. Her work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net, and has appeared in *The Georgia Review*, *American Literary Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Lolwe*, *The Account*, and more. In 2023, *There’s Nothing Left For You Here* won the Kimbilio National Fiction Prize. This is her first book. She lives in Lexington, Kentucky.

Publication Date: March 15, 2025
Print | Page Count: 180 | Price: \$19.95 |
ISBN: 978-1-961897-44-1
E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-45-8

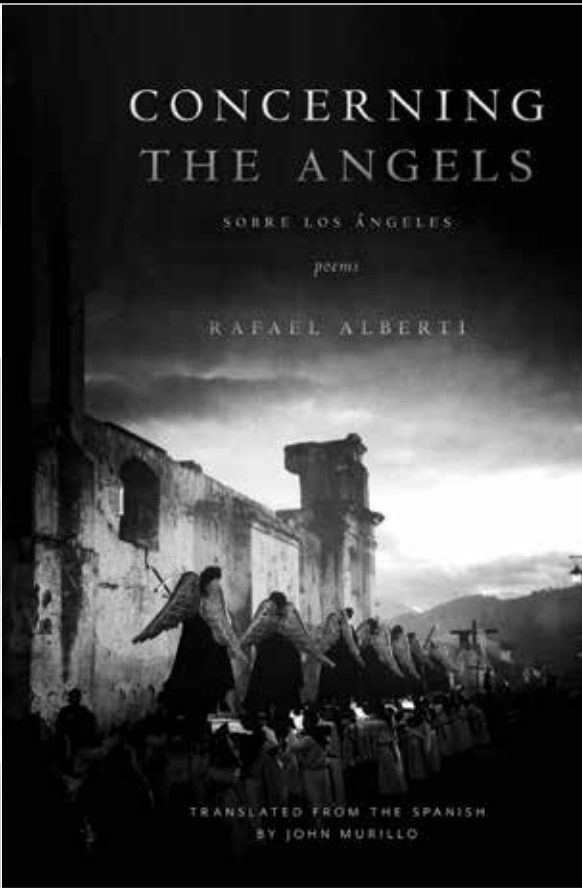
Allegra Solomon has written an impressive debut collection of short stories that offers readers a glimpse at a stellar writing career to come. These 8 stories showcase not only Solomon’s gift of the fresh and the new, but also allow us into the lives of enduring characters and their relationships. Romantic love. An anxious voyeur. The art of friendship. Black and brown girls protecting and thriving. Throughout, Solomon impresses us with her storytelling while unpacking the lives of a multicultural cast of characters who refuse conventional expectations of race or class. These characters are contemporary in the best way and get ready for them to take up space in your head and heart. The writing and the characters both have staying power!
—Crystal Wilkinson

“Madrigal Without Redress”

Because, finally, the sad fires abandoned you
and the slow smoke watched,
closing off the castle, the snow-covered jail,
where the rose forgets its ghost,

my heart, with neither voice nor battalion,
comes solo to the bum-rush
of those lights, mirrors of ash,
bearers of a dead one south of death.

See his chest, risen, in two brooks
of water and blood, toward yours,
already burnt hollow, kindling, facile
and false, flower, my sorrow, without redress.



In his first full-length translation, celebrated poet John Murillo (Winner of the Kingsley Tufts Award and the Four Quartets Prize) brings Rafael Alberti’s *Concerning the Angels* (*Sobre los ángeles*) to an English-reading audience. Murillo’s foreword introduces *Sobre los ángeles* as “a monument—albeit a severely neglected monument—of early twentieth-century literature.” Despite having “penned a masterwork of social and psychic malaise as deserving as any of its place in the global canon,” Alberti has disappeared into relative obscurity among readers of English language poetry, and Murillo’s crucial intervention allows the Spanish poet’s voice to once again echo prophetically from this book’s opening poem, “Paradise Lost”: “throughout the centuries, / through the nothingness of the world, / I, without sleep, search for you.” Insofar as the speaker addresses a figure named Shadow, he also seems to imagine us, his future readers, who need these prescient lyrics written in the time leading up to Spain’s civil war and ensuing decades of fascist rule. Bringing his signature gifts to translating from the Spanish, Murillo has given new life to what many consider Alberti’s magnum opus and delivered our marching orders for the resistance the future will require. “It is time you gave me your hand / and scratched into me the little light that catches a hole as it closes / and killed for me this evil word I plan to plunge into the thawing earth.”

Raphael Alberti translated by John Murillo

Considered one of the major Spanish poets of the 20th century, Rafael Alberti (1902–1999) was the author of over twenty volumes of poetry, including *Marinero en Tierra*, *Cal y Canto*, and *La Amante*. He also wrote several plays and the celebrated memoir, *La Arboleda Perdida* (*The Lost Grove*). His many honors include the Premio Cervantes, the America Award, and the Lenin Peace Prize among others. *Sobre los ángeles* (*Concerning the Angels*) is regarded by many as his magnum opus.

John Murillo is the author of the poetry collections *Up Jump the Boogie* and *Kontemporary Amerikan Poetry*. His honors include the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, the Four Quartets Prize from the T.S. Eliot Foundation and the Poetry Society of America, and the Lucille Clifton Legacy Award from St. Mary’s College of Maryland. He is a professor of English and teaches in the MFA program at Hunter College. He lives in Brooklyn.

Concerning the Angels

Publication Date: March 15, 2025

Print | Page Count: 190 | Price: \$17.95 |

ISBN: 978-1-961897-42-7

E-Book | Price: \$9.99 | eISBN: 978-1-961897-43-4

Long considered Spanish Generation of 1927 poet Rafael Alberti’s masterpiece and one of the most haunting and unforgettable extended sequences in modern Spanish poetry, *Concerning the Angels* returns to English-language readers in an entrancing new translation by poet John Murillo. Capturing Alberti’s rich sensuousness, the profound strangeness of his lyric voice, the sublime contours of this poetic world-between-worlds, and the poet’s depthless sense of loss—of love, of faith, of his former style—Murillo gifts us with a 21st century classic.

—John Keene

The sonic pleasures of Alberti’s poems manifest majestically in these stunning translations from John Murillo. Every image, every “static shadow of the dog” comes to life in Murillo’s English recreations of Alberti’s cadence and mesmerizing intensity of his poems.

—Idra Novey

Hotel Oblivion
by Cynthia Cruz

Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry

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—*Los Angeles Review of Books*

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Bianca
by Eugenia Leigh

“Eugenia Leigh’s new collection, *Bianca*, is hard to read—but harder to look away from. In these fierce, intimate poems, Leigh writes about motherhood complicated by mental illness and post-traumatic stress. ‘I expected to die much younger than I am now,’ she writes in a piece called ‘Cruelty.’ Every one of these poems is a victory, artistic and personal.”
—*The Washington Post Book World*

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6 x 9 | 124 pages
Pub Date: March 2023 | Poetry

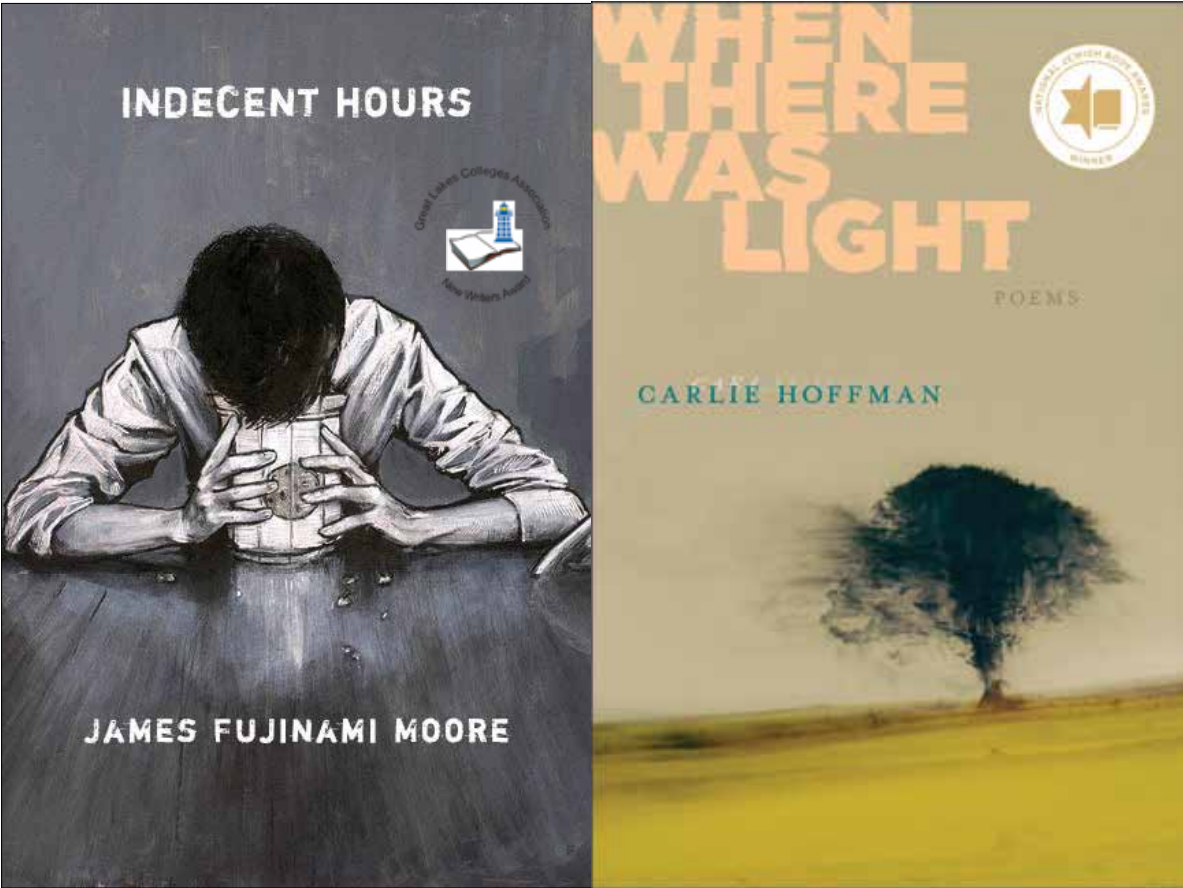
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—Mary Szybist

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When There Was Light
by Carlie Hoffman

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—Dara Barrois/Dixon

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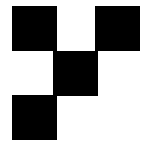
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This catalogue and the publication of our books were made possible by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

We are grateful for the public funds we receive from the New York State Council on the Arts.

We wish to thank the individuals and private foundations who support Four Way Books.

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